

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS,

TRANSLATED

From the GREEK of ÆSCHYLUS.

By THOMAS MORELL.



L O N D O N :

Sold by T. LONGMAN in Pater-noster Row.

MD.DCC.LXXIII.

TO

DAVID GARRICK, Esq.

INDISPUTABLY

THE FIRST ACTOR IN THIS
(PERHAPS IN ANY) AGE

THE TRAILLION

OF THIS THE FIRST PLAY EXHIBIT

IS DESCRIBED

BY HIS MOST OBEYANT
AND HUMBLE SERVANT

T. MORILL

Thomas Green
May 1773

T H E
I N T R O D U C T I O N .

HAVING in my preface to the translation to the *Hecuba* of *Euripides* given some account of the Greek drama, the chorus, &c. I shall here, for the benefit of the mere English reader, only make a few general observations, as a key to the piece before us, without charging the text with any further annotations.

It has been proved by many writers, antient and modern, if not to demonstration, to the highest moral certainty, that the chief parts of human literature had their derivation from the sacred oracles; that the choicest contemplations of Gentile philosophy were derived, originally, if not immediately, from the sacred scriptures and Jewish church: and, in spite of the wild imagination of the poets, we still perceive in their writing some glimmering of truth, which they could not conceal under all their fictions. Thus, *Ovid*, in his account of the formation of the world, makes man the last of the creation, as in *Genesis*: and what

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else

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else is *Prometheus* who tempers the earth, and *Minerva* who animates the workmanship, but God, who formed man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life?

But further, with regard to *Prometheus*; some philologists reduce him to *Noah* (Voss. de Idol. i. c. 8.) Others to *Magog*, the grandson of *Noah*; in that, he is styled the son of *Japetus*, as *Magog* was the son of *Japhet*; and that the posterity of *Magog* was placed about *Caucasus*, where *Prometheus* is feigned to lie; and to have invented the use of fire, in forging iron, &c. because there are many subterraneous fires in those places (Bochart Phal. l. i. c. 2. Stillingfleet Orig. sacr. l. iii. c. 5. § 9, &c.) And, lastly, that the fiction of his being devoured by an eagle turns upon the name of *Magog*, which signifies a man devoured by chagrin. But, according to Herodotus, this prince not being able to avoid the overflowing of a river, called *The Eagle*, withdrew himself to *Caucasus*, till *Hercules* having raised banks to it, permitted him to cultivate the country, and to follow his pursuits in the study of astronomy, &c. For the rest of this story, I refer the reader to the Abbè *Banier*'s Explanation of Ovid's Met. l. i. From whence it is necessary likewise to observe, that the plant called *Ferula*, in Greek *Narthix*, was a kind of fennel, with stalks five or six feet high; the rind of which plant is very hard, and is filled with a sort of pith, which the fire consumes very slowly. The seamen, says *Monf. de Tournesfort*, use it to carry fire from one place to another.

In

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In the first scene are introduced, with great decorum, two persons, called in *Greek Cratos* and *Bia*, Strength and Power, representing the ministers of *Jove* (or the Almighty) as executing his omnipotent justice on the children of wrath and disobedience; as is also *Vulcan*, the god of fire; who, notwithstanding he had just reason of complaint against the supposed criminal, for having stole his art, yet as a kindred-god he sympathizes with him, but submits to the will of the Supreme.

The chorus consists of sea-nymphs, the daughters of *Oceanus*, who, according to their tender sex, have compassion on the sufferer, and endeavour to soften and mitigate his pains.

Oceanus, their father, is next introduced; who likewise sympathizes with Prometheus; gives him advice, and offers to intercede for him with *Jupiter*: *Prometheus* will not permit this (as being a fruitless and hazardous attempt) but treats him with great complaisance; and indeed the whole dialogue between them, however complimentary, is exceedingly grave, solemn, and affecting.

With regard to *Io*, who is introduced in Act IV. it is remarked, that, as the Greeks embellished their history with the principal events of Egypt, this fable of *Io* originally came from thence. Greece received it when *Inachus* went to settle there. Hence several writers, upon *Homer's* authority, make *Io*, or *Isis*, the daughter of *Inachus*, the first king of *Argos*. They say moreover, that

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Jupiter took her away by force, and carried her to the isle of *Crete*; that he had by her a son named *Epaphus*, who went to reign in *Egypt*, &c. It is added, that *Niobe*, who had also the Name of *Juno*, having conceived a jealousy of that intrigue, put *Io* under the custody of her uncle *Argos*, a most vigilant person (and therefore said to have had a hundred eyes); that *Jupiter* ordered his confident to kill him; and that his mistress having embarked in a vessel for *Egypt*, which carried the figure of a cow at its head, the story of her transformation took its rise from thence: so, Abbè *Banier*: but *Gabritius* thinks it might be borrowed from her wandering in the woods, and other remote places like a straggling cow; be that as it will, the propriety of her being introduced here seems to be, that in her wandering, she meets with a fellow-sufferer, under the oppression of the same tyrant; that they condole with, and comfort each other; and *Io* is at length assured by *Prometheus*, that she shall overcome all her troubles; and bring forth a son, from whom should spring a godlike hero, called *Hercules*, who should deliver *him* likewise from his distress. And here I must observe, that, as *Æschylus* wrote two other plays on this subject, now lost, called *Prometheus the Firestealer*, and *Prometheus released*. This, still extant, being the intermediate one, we cannot so well judge of the whole business, or what *Hercules* is supposed to be his deliverer: *Philostrophus* tells us (l. ii. c. 2.) it was not the *Theban*; whose history is charged with the adventures of all those who had the same name; which,
by

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by the way, was given to many such great men as had rendered themselves famous by their exploits. Others suppose, that he was released by *Jupiter* himself, as a recompense for having revealed the oracle of the *Destinies*, that the son of *Thetis* should be more powerful than his father: and indeed for both these opinions there are sufficient hints given in this play.

In Act V. *Mercury* descends, and being somewhat imperious in the delivery of his message from *Jupiter*, he is not treated with that complaisance with which *Prometheus* received *Oceanus*; but with the highest disdain and contempt: whereupon follows the catastrophe; and *Prometheus* still persevering in his obstinacy, the whole is closed with a most awful scene of lightning and thunder; for his destruction; which could not but have great effect upon the audience; and, by way of moral, convey the tremendous consequence of repugnancy to the will of the Supreme.

Lastly, as a convincing proof of what I before asserted; in this piece many extraordinary passages will occur to the Christian reader, if at all acquainted with the Scriptures; relating to the destruction and renovation of mankind, the fall of *Lucifer* and his angels; and the just grounds whereon the fathers founded the analogy referred to in the note on v. 233. 850. of the original.

T H E

THE ARGUMENT.

FROM THE GREEK.

WHEN Prometheus had bestowed on man the fire stoln from Jupiter; by the help of which they had invented all kinds of arts; Jupiter enraged at this presumption delivered him to his ministers, here stiled Strength and Power, and commanded them, with Vulcan, to convey him to mount Caucasus, and there bind him with iron chains. This being done, all the Sea-nymphs repair thither to give him comfort; and after them, Oceanus, their father, who declares his intention to address Jupiter with prayer, and entreat him to release Prometheus: but Prometheus suffers him not, well knowing that his prayer would avail nothing with the cruel mind of Jupiter. Oceanus hereupon leaving him, Io, the daughter of Inachus, is introduced in her wandering state, and is informed by him, not only of what she had already suffered, but also of what she still should suffer; and that at length one of her posterity should release him, namely Hercules, the son of Jupiter; and that from the mere touch of Jupiter she should bring forth a son called Epaphus. But Prometheus speaking somewhat too freely of Jupiter, as if a son of his own begetting should dethrone him, with other contumelious language, Mercury comes to him from Jupiter, and threatens him with destructive thunder unless he will explain himself; which Prometheus refusing to do, he is demolished with a burst of lightning and thunder.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

POWER and STRENGTH.		OCEANUS.
VULCAN.		Io, daughter of Inachus.
PROMETHEUS.		MERCURY.

CHORUS of SEA-NYPHS.

The Scene, on Mount CAUCASUS in Scythia.

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

A C T I.

POWER, and STRENGTH, VULCAN,
PROMETHEUS.

POWER.

BEHOLD! to the remotest boundary
Of Scythia's pathless desert, we are come!
'Tis yours, O Vulcan, now, with duteous care,
To execute our father's dread command;
And, on this tow'ring craggy rock, to bind
This popular thief in adamantine chains.
Your glory, and the flower of every art,
Celestial fire, he stole, and gave to man.
Such is the crime, and such the punishment;
That he may learn to reverence the throne
Of Jove, nor court the vain applause of men.

V. Ye ministers of Jove, his Strength and Pow'r,
Your task thus finish'd, nothing more remains
For proof of *your* obedience: but let *me*,
Not quite so hardy, own, that with regret
I am constrain'd to bind a kindred-god
On this tempestuous cliff: yet, be it so;
For Jove commands, and Jove must be obey'd,
Or dreadful is the consequence.—

Apostrophe to Prometheus.

O thou true son of Themis (ever wise
And just in all her counsels) know, that I,

Reluctant

Reluctant as thyself, must torture thee,
 In chains indissoluble; bound on this
 Inhospitable mount; where neither voice
 Of man is heard, nor shape of mortal seen;
 And where, unshelter'd from the mid-day sun,
 The colour of thy flow'ry bloom shall fade:
 Oft shalt thou wish for the soft cooling breeze
 Of particolour'd night,—dark soon, and cold:—
 Again the sun exhales the morning dews,
 And blazes in full day:—thus every hour
 Shall still afflict thee with a various pain:
 While not a comforter on earth is found.
 Such are the fruits of your regard for man.
 For, tho' yourself a god, yet without fear
 Of the Supreme, you have vouchsaf'd to man
 Unwarrantable gifts: for this condemn'd,
 You keep this hideous rock, by day and night,
 Erect in posture, sleepless, and forlorn:
 While vain are all your tears, and sighs, and groans:
 Inexorable is the mind of Jove——

“Monarchs are apt at first to be severe.”——

P. Be that as 'twill. Why do you still delay,
 And thus in vain commiserate a wretch,
 Obnoxious to the gods; and, sure, to thee,
 Whose honours he hath stoln, to bribe mankind?

V. Sacred the names, of relative, and friend!

P. Tho' dear and sacred, fear you not much more
 To disobey the will of the Supreme?

V. How confident, and merciless art thou!

P. And what relief could pity give?—Beware,
 Lest vain your labour, as your pity vain.——

V. O, how detestable this manual art!

P. Detest it not; your art is not the cause
 Of these his sufferings; tho' severe, deserv'd.

V. Yet let me wish this task in other hands.

P. All things have their appointment, save the will
 And rule of Jove; for he alone is free,

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V. I grant obedience due to the Supreme.

P. Haste then to bind this convict; lest delay
Should be observ'd by his all-seeing eye.

V. And see you not, the hand-cuffs are prepar'd?

P. Take them (and when inclos'd his hands and arms)
Let them be clinch'd, and hammer'd to this rock.

V. Well:—'tis perform'd; and not perform'd in vain.

P. Strain him still closer: let no part be loose;
So great his art, that he defies these chains;
Nor doubts release from desperate distress.

V. This arm, at least, he never can unloose.

P. Let this be bound as firm: that he may learn,
How weak his subtlety compar'd with Jove.

V. None but Prometheus can condemn my work.

P. Fix the sharp-biting steel athwart his breast.—

V. Thy pain, alas! Prometheus, I bewail.—

P. Still dilatory, do you pity him,
Whom Jove declares his enemy? Beware
Lest you should want the pity, shewn to him.

V. You see a sight most horrid to behold.

P. I see the guilty, suffering for his crimes.—
But come, enrib him with these massy bars.

V. All shall be done; cease you but your commands.

P. No; I will still command; still urge thee on.
Stoop down; and with strong shackles load his legs.

V. That work indeed requires no mighty pains.

P. Secure his feet with these rock-piercing gyves.—
Severe is he, who overlooks your work.

V. Thy cruel tongue suits well thy horrid form.

P. Upbraid me not; nor this my turn of mind.
Be thou as calm, and tender, as you please;
I will enjoy the fierceness of my wrath.

V. No more.—His limbs ensnar'd,—we may depart.

[Exit.

P. Now, now insult, and glory in the gift [To Prom.
You stole for man; the beings of a day;
From whom you can expect no recompence;
Since vain is all their help, to extricate

B

Their

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Their boasted patron from these painful bonds.—
Prometheus! False the name, tho' giv'n above!
So great your want of some Promethean art
To rescue thee, from this your sore distress. [Exit.

PROMETHEUS *solus*.

Thou circumambient air; swift-winged winds;
Ye crystal springs, and rivers; and ye seas,
Waving with vast expanse; and O thou earth,
Parent of all; and thou broad eye of day,
All-seeing, all-enlivening; O, behold,
What I, a god, now suffer from the gods!
Behold! To what indignities enchain'd,
I, myriads of ages, here,
Must struggle under torturing pains!
Such cruel bonds hath this new king
Of heav'n, inflicted in his wrath.
In heavy sorrow must I mourn
Present, and future miseries.
Alas! alas! From what kind hand
Can I expect
An end of these my troubles?—

But why this vain complaint; since well I know,
By accurate intuition, all events;
Nor can calamity come unforeseen?
And shall I not with patience bear my doom,
Since irresistible the pow'r of Fate?
But such my lot, I know not how to speak,
Nor yet be silent; when the only crime,
That subjects me to this forlorn distress,
Is liberality; in that I stole
The master-spring of every gainful art,
Ev'n sacred fire, and in a hollow cane,
Convey'd the precious benefit to man.
For this my crime, thus am I recompens'd,
Expos'd in chains to the inclement sky.—

But whence this sudden sound,
And this strange-scented air?

Flows

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

Flows it from being human, or divine,
Or from some demigod, who deigns to visit
This forlorn boundary;
Perhaps to view, and pity my distress?
Whoe'er thou art, behold a wretched god;
A god in chains; abhorr'd by Jove,
And all the court of heaven, for gifts
Vouchsaf'd, in bounteous love, to man.—
But, ah! I hear the sound of wings
That hiffing sweep the yielding air,
And strike my soul
With accidental terror.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

CHORUS, PROMETHEUS.

S T R O P H E I.

CHORUS.

FEAR not, Prometheus. Lo! a friendly band!
Sailing on eager wings,
With swift contention, we are come,
From our reluctant fire.
The winds with their impetuous tide
Hurried us hither; when we heard
The clatt'ring sound of fetters,
That ecchoed through the deep.
Hence ruddy bashfulness aside,
On winged chariots flying,
Our sandals we disdain'd.

Prom. Offspring of Thetis ever-fair,
And ever-fruitful, who surrounds

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With everlasting waves this earth ;
Ye daughters of Oceanus,
Behold, and see with what strong chains
Here pinion'd down, I am condemn'd,
Alas ! to keep unenvied watch,
By day and night,
On this rock's craggy summit !

A N T I S T R O P H E I.

Cho. I see ; Prometheus : tho' a horrid mist
Comes o'er my tearful eye ;
While I behold thee thus expos'd,
In adamantine chains,
To scorching blasts, and wintry winds :—
While the new governors, that sit
Enthron'd on high Olympus,
Reign paramount ; and Jove,
Whose ordinances seem unjust,
Supreme with pow'r despotic,
Annuls the antient laws.

Prom. O that, within the central earth,
Or in th' abyss of Tartarus,
(The dreary mansions of the dead
Where Pluto reigns) I were confin'd
In chains indissoluble ; where
Nor gods, nor others could insult
My pains !—But now this wretched sight,
To all expos'd,
Hath made my foes triumphant.

S T R O P H E II.

Cho. What, so hard-hearted, god
Can take delight in misery ;
And would not rather sympathize
With these misfortunes, Jove excepted ;
Who, with perpetual wrath,
And mind inflexible,
Reigns o'er th' inferior gods ;

Unknowing

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

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Unknowing to be calm; before
He satiates his revengeful spirit,
Or is dethron'd; if art or pow'r
Can execute the bold attempt.

Prom. Know then, however strongly clinch'd,
And firm, these contumelious gyves,
This king of gods and men will want
My counsel to secure his throne.
When nor the most persuasive arts
Of flatt'ring words shall soften me,
Nor the most stormy threats compel,
The secret to disclose; before
He hath releas'd me from these chains,
And recompens'd:
This ignominious bondage.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Cho. You seem too confident,
And bold:—this liberty of speech,
Ill suiting your severe distress,
Wounds ev'n my soul with piercing terror;
So dread I the event.—
Where driven by this storm,
Can you expect to find
A peaceful haven? where find rest,
While thus the heart of Saturn's son
Remains implacable, and all
Incomprehensible his ways?

Prom. Severe I know him; perhaps just,
In what seems justice to himself:
But still I hope, the time will come,
When taught by danger imminent,
He'll add to justice clemency;
And courting amity, himself,
Most willing join my willing hand;
His wrath appeas'd,
And rigid indignation.

Chor.

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Cho. Be pleas'd in ample manner to relate,
For what great error Jove hath tortur'd thee,
With such severe and ignominious pains :—
Tell us, if 'twill not add to the offence.—

Prom. To speak, or to be silent, either way
Is painful to me; but uncommon grief
Extorts this narrative at your request.

When first contention rose among the gods,
And strange sedition seiz'd the courts of heav'n;
Some were inclin'd old Saturn to dethrone,
That Jove, his son might reign; and others, firm
To Saturn, dar'd withstand the rising pow'r.
I gave good counsel to the sons of heav'n
And earth, the mighty Titans; but in vain:
For, in their haughty spirit, they disdain'd
All mild and moderate counsel; and presum'd,
On their own brutal strength, to take with ease,
And to themselves secure, the throne of heav'n.
But with kind caution Themis (Terra call'd,
In nature one, in titles different)
Had oft forewarn'd me that the higher pow'rs,
Must be subdu'd by art, not strength and force.
Endeavouring to inculcate this advice,
Not one vouchsaf'd me ev'n a gracious look.
On this I thought it prudent to unite
With honour'd Themis, on the side of Jove;
Whom too I gratified in this request.
Hence, by my counsel, Saturn was hurl'd down,
With his associates, from his antient throne,
Into the deep abyss of Tartarus.
And thus for honours, ev'n by me, conferr'd,
With chains and wretchedness, this tyrant-king
Of heav'n, the obligation hath repaid.

“ For the disease is common, among kings,
“ More so, if tyrants, to distrust their friends.”

Now, to your question, briefly I'll explain
The sole true cause of this my punishment.

When

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When Jove ascended first his father's throne,
He various gifts dispens'd, with bounteous hand,
His kingdom to establish with the gods;
Regarding not the state of wretched man,
Whom he determin'd to destroy, and raise,
From universal ruin, a new race.

When there was none who dar'd resist his will,
I interceded; and I sav'd them, from
This bold extinction in the realms beneath.

Hence am I tortur'd with calamity;
So terrible to see, much more to feel.—

I could not but commiserate frail man;
Yet no commiseration found myself;
But here, in lasting fetters bound, must stand,
Inglorious sight, the cruel scorn of Jove.

Cho. Sure, of a steely heart, or made of rock,
Is he, who can behold thy miseries,
Prometheus, unconcern'd.—We neither wish'd
To see, nor seeing them, can now refrain
To speak our grief in sympathizing tears.

Prom. To friends indeed, I am a wretched sight.—

Cho. But say, what more have you conferr'd on man?

Prom. I have extirpated the fear of death.

Cho. And what the remedy for this disease?

Prom. Blind Hope, sweet lenitive of pain and care.

Cho. An universal benefit to man!

Prom. Yet more; I taught the general use of fire.

Cho. Enjoy they at their will substantial fire?

Prom. Yes; and from thence shall various arts arise.

Cho. And this the crime, for which you are condemn'd
By unrelenting Jove, to struggle with
Affliction so severe?—But say, Prometheus,
What end of this dire conflict you expect?

Prom. No other end, than the mere will of Jove.

Cho. His will? what hope of this? Have you not err'd?
How, and wherein, would be no pleasant task,
For us to utter, or for you to hear.

No

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No more then, but accept our good advice;
And seek, submissive, to relieve your pains.

Prom. Prone are the ever-happy to advise,
Exhort, and counsel others in distress.
I know all this; and freely own, it was
A voluntary error, to assist
Frail man; for whom these sufferings I endure:
But ne'er imagin'd, that good-will deserv'd
A punishment so cruelly severe;
Thus to be macerated, bound in chains
Upon this horrid solitary rock.—
Yet bewail not, my friends, these present ills;
But, lighting on the ground, vouchsafe to hear
My future lot, that ye may learn the whole.—
Oblige, oblige me; and with sympathy
Assist me in distress.—“ The vagabond
“ Calamity oft flies from friend to friend.”—

Cho. You speak not to unwilling ears.—
Lightly, Prometheus, we descend,
Quitting the spacious field of air,
The unmolested path of birds;
To tread this craggy rock; and learn,
With eager mind,
The whole of your misfortunes.

SCENE II.

OCEANUS, PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

Oc. Measuring a length of way, I come,
(On this swift-winged animal,
Unrein'd, obedient to my word;)
To visit thee in thy distress
With sympathizing heart. For, know,
Prometheus, not the rights alone
Of kindred, brought me hither; but
Th' acknowledg'd merits of a friend,
Second to none in virtue.—

This

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This from experience you shall learn,
And that I scorn a flattering tongue.—
For say, Prometheus, say, wherein
I can exert my pow'r, to give
Thee aid :—and than Oceanus
You shall not find
A friend more firm and constant.

Prom. Ah ! whence this favour ? sure, Oceanus
Comes not to see my torture, as a spy
From Jove ? that thus he ventures to forsake
His wonted care (the rule of all the floods)
And nature's stony caverns, for this land
Of iron ? No ; he rather comes, I think,
With kind condolment.—Lo, a friend of Jove,
Who help'd to seat him on the starry throne,
For this good turn bow'd down with misery !—

Oc. I see, Prometheus ; and presume to give
Advice ; all-wise and knowing as you are.—
Know then thyself ; and form anew thy mind ;
Since a new governor now reigns in heav'n.
To persevere in harsh and stinging words,
May provoke *him*, who hears thee from above,
Supreme and irresistible, to make
Thy present sufferings but a sport, compar'd
With those that may ensue : therefore throw off
The violent spirit you have long indulg'd,
And humbly seek dismissal from these chains.—
These words, perhaps, Prometheus, you may think
The cautious dictates of old age ; but, know,
The tongue of haughty insolence oft meets
With like rewards : and yet you persevere,
Not humbled by a load of miseries ;
As if desirous still to add more weight.
Accept me for your friend and counsellor ;
Nor kick against the pricks : for, absolute,
And jealous, is, the monarch that now reigns.
Hence will I go ; and try, if my address
Can ought avail, to free you from these bonds.—

C

Mean-

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Meanwhile, I pray be silent, or at least,
 Restrain the bold invectives of your tongue:
 For you are wise, and accurately know,
 "That a rash tongue oft costs the speaker dear."

Prom. Let me congratulate your happiness;
 Who, tho' engag'd, in the same bold attempt
 To succour man, have yet escap'd the wrath
 Of Jove.—Cease then your friendly care for me;
 For to all pray'r he is inflexible:
 And possibly this visit may provoke
 Resentment.—Think, at least, this caution just.—

Oc. Not from report of others, but from fact,
 I now perceive your wisdom, more inclin'd
 To counsel others than instruct yourself.
 But from my purpose think not to dissuade
 My ready mind:—I glory, and will glory,
 In full persuasion, Jove will hear my pray'r,
 And grant me your release from these vile bonds.

Prom. In part I praise thee, and will ever praise
 This your alacrity in my behalf;
 But cannot recommend the vain address,
 That only will fatigue the willing mind,
 And help me not; cease then and leave this wretch;
 Who ne'er, because afflicted, would involve
 Others in the same fate; much less his friend.—

Oc. No; I must feel compassion, now, for thee,
 As for thy brother Atlas; who sustains,
 (Near to the western ocean where he stands)
 On his broad shoulders an enormous weight;
 The massy pillars both of heav'n and earth.—
 Nor less can I commiserate the fate
 Of him, who dwell'd in the Cilician cave;
 That warlike hundred-headed monster, Typhon,
 Who dar'd, himself an army, to rebel
 Against the gods, and from his horrid jaws
 Breathing fell slaughter, while his glaring eyes
 Flash'd lightning, threaten'd ev'n the throne of Jove:
 Till on him rush'd the ever-watchful god,

And

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And with his thunders, wing'd with sulph'rous flame,
Stop'd the career of his big-sounding threats.
For, smitten at the heart with fiery bolts,
Broken is all his strength; and headlong hurl'd,
He lies an useless and extensive load,
Beneath the roots of Ætna's flaming vault:
Where Vulcan with his Cyclops' hammers out
The thunderbolts of Jove; whence floods of fire
Burst out; and mix'd with melted ore, and stone,
Lay waste the fruitful plains of Sicily;
As oft as Typhon, in this burning cave,
Not quite consum'd, but living still to pain,
Venteth from his big paunch his fiery groans.

Prom. Well—You are wise; and need no monitor.—
Make your own safety your peculiar care:
As for Prometheus, leave him to wear out
His tedious sufferings; till the wrath of Jove,
And vehement indignation shall subside.

Oc. Know you not this, Prometheus, that soft words
Are most successfully applied to wrath?

Prom. If properly applied they may succeed;
But vain their force against a raging fit.—

Oc. But, such my present purpose and design,
Can there be danger in the kind attempt?

Prom. An idle labour; vain simplicity!

Oc. Let that charge fall on me; 'tis sometimes gain,
For a wise man his wisdom to conceal.

Prom. No; you mistake: the blame will center here.

Oc. If so; I must desist; and take my leave.—

Prom. Lest your kind pity should exasperate—

Oc. Him, who now reigns supremely absolute?

Prom. Yes, Jove; beware, that you provoke him not.—

Oc. Your punishment shall tutor me herein.

Prom. Fly, hasten; and retain this cautious mind.

Oc. I go, Prometheus; words like these incite
My ready will: and my four-footed bird,
With his broad pinions fans the yielding air,
Impatient to enjoy his place of rest.

[Exit.

14 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

S T R O P H E.

Cho. Prometheus, I deplore
Thy sad destructive fate;
Pour'd from the melting eye,
A plaintive stream
Of tears hath bath'd the chanell'd cheek.
Such mighty things against thee
Are wrought by Jove's despotic pow'r,
Who makes the former gods to know
His insolent pre-eminence.

A N T I S T R O P H E.

The regions all around
Pour forth aloud their grief;
Thy former noble state
Bewailing, and
Thy brethren's antient dignity.
And all, who now inhabit
The sacred land of Asia,
With sympathizing tears condole
Thy lamentable misery:

E P O D E.

Virgins, who dwell in Colchis,
Ever in fight intrepid;
Scythia's antient people,
In the distant tract of land
Around the vast Mæotic lake;
Arabia's warlike race;
And mighty armies, who possessing,
Caucasus, thy lofty summit,
Brandish their slaught'ring spears;
(All, all, Prometheus, mourn thy fate.)

M O N O S T R O P H E.

One only of celestial race
I've seen alike involv'd

In

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS. 15

In ever-during pain ;
Groaning beneath the weight immense
Of the celestial orbs.
The foaming waves resound,
Loud echoing through the deep ;
Ev'n Pluto's dreary mansions,
Beneath the earth,
Send forth their hollow roar ;
And their compassionate murmurs
The limpid streams return.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

PROMETHEUS.

THINK me not silent, from disdain, or pride :
No ; I am tortur'd in my mind ; to bear
Such base injurious treatment from the gods ;
These upstart gods, on whom I have conferr'd
Such honours, as no other pow'r could give.
You will excuse recital ; since I make
This my address to you, who know them well.
I'll speak of mortals ; wretched as they were,
All rude, and ignorant, till inspir'd by me,
With wisdom, and the rules of civil life.
(Not to reflect upon them, but to shew
The favours they receiv'd from my good will.)
With eyes, and ears, they neither saw, nor heard ;
Like visionary phantoms of the night,
In wild confusion wandering here and there,
They knew not yet, by studious art, to build
Or mud-wall'd cottage, or well-timber'd house ;

But,

16 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

But, ever buried like the ant, they liv'd
 In subterraneous caverns; scarce so wise:
 For they as yet knew not by certain signs
 The changeful seasons of the circling year;
 When winter with his hoary frost came on,
 Or flow'ry spring, or summer's ripening heat.
 Hence all their actions without reason, art,
 Or prudent forecast; till with knowledge deep,
 I pointed out the courses of the stars,
 Rising, and setting; and that wond'rous work,
 The planetary system; and to these
 I added many curious arts, ev'n that
 Most useful of all arts, arithmetic;
 Letters, that silent language of the soul;
 And the great use of memory, the eye's
 True register, and storehouse of the mind,
 Hence call'd the mother of the muses; these
 Were all my favours: and from me they learn'd,
 To bind the yoke upon the stubborn necks
 Of bulls, made serviceable unto man,
 In the laborious tillage of the ground.
 By my instructions the unruly horse
 Now champs the bit, and draws the golden car,
 That superb ornament of luxury.
 Taught first by me, the wand'ring mariner
 With swelling canvas plough'd the foamy deep.
 Such arts I found for man; tho' now, alas!
 I want some art to free me from these bonds.

Cho. Great and unworthy these your sufferings;
 While destitute of some prudential art,
 For your own ease and welfare, you seem like
 A bad physician, who desponds, and knows
 For his own malady no certain cure.

Prom. But you shall hear what will surprize you more;
 What other arts, what other policies,
 Mortals have learn'd from me; and this the chief;
 When any labour'd with a sore disease,
 They knew no remedy, by drink, or diet,

Uñction,

Unction, or cataplasm; but in mere want
 Of medicine pin'd away; before I taught
 What virtues lay conceal'd in simple plants,
 And by what compositions to expel
 The morbid matter from the part diseas'd.—
 I various ways of prophecy disclos'd.—
 How to interpret the sure truth of dreams;
 To disenvell oracles obscure;
 And rightly judge of strange occurrences:
 With nice distinction to observe the course
 Of birds, adverse or prosp'rous, as they fly,
 Or to the right hand, or the left; what food
 They variously delight in, after kind;
 The constant, and instinctive enmity
 Of birds of prey; and the sweet harmony
 Between the social and domestic kind:
 To search the entrails of the victim beast;
 And what bright colour pleaseth best the gods,
 What gall, or liver, of a various cast:
 And how to burn the ribs, enclos'd with fat,
 And the broad haunches, grateful sacrifice!—
 I taught them to observe the trailing smoke,
 And spiry flame, signs, heretofore obscure:
 All these have I reduc'd to certain art,
 Not by the vulgar easily attain'd.—
 So much for these; yet more, I counsell'd them,
 To ransack the deep bowels of the earth,
 And thence extract brass, iron, silver, gold.
 No one, who would not willingly expose
 His folly, dares to rival me herein.
 In short, all the known arts of man are mine.
Cho. Be not so anxious for the good of man,
 Neglectful of yourself: but soon, I hope,
 Free'd from these bonds, you'll rise another Jove.
Prom. 'Tis not in fate, yet to accomplish this;
 Till, with a sad variety of pain,
 Bow'd down, and wearied, I shake off these chains:
 Far stronger is necessity than art.

Cho.

18 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

Cho. Whence hath necessity her strength and rule?

Prom. From the three sister-fates, in pow'r combin'd
With the revengeful furies.—

Cho. ——— And is Jove
Obnoxious to this pow'r?

Prom. ——— Ev'n Jove himself
Can never supersede the pow'r of fate.

Cho. And what his fate but thus to rule for ever?

Prom. Time will reveal, what now you must excuse.

Cho. What is the consequence, you strive to hide?

Prom. Turn the discourse: the times will not permit
To dwell thereon: what is, must be, conceal'd:
On this depends my freedom from these chains.

STROPHE I.

Cho. O may I never prove rebellious,
To render the Supreme
Mine enemy!
May I attend the festivals,
That oft our father Ocean keeps,
In honour of the gods throughout
The everlasting mansions of the deep.
Let me not ev'n in words offend;
And never drop
This pious resolution.

ANTISTROPHE I.

So pleasant is it, and delightful,
In soothing hope, and pure
Complacency,
To lengthen out the sweets of life.
But horrid, on the other hand,
Thee, O Prometheus, to behold
Tortur'd with infinite distress, because,
Without due reverence to Jove,
You pay to man
Immoderate devotion.

STROPHE

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS. 19

STROPHE II.

From man, ungrateful man,
Say, what assistance, what return,
Have you receiv'd, or can expect?
From man, whose life is a mere dream,
Weak, and defenceless, blind and vain?
Nought of their counsels can avail, against
The ordinance of Jove.

ANTISTROPHE II.

This lesson I am taught,
From your distress; now forc'd to sing
A diff'rent note, from that I sung,
Around your bath, around your bed;
When with the rhetoric of gifts,
You, on our fair Hesionè, prevail'd
To join the nuptial bands.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

IO, PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

Io.

WHAT land! or, what inhabitants!—
Whom see I wint'ring on this rock
In torturing pains?—Say, for what crime
Is this destructive punishment?—
And tell me, where
In woeful plight I've wander'd.—

Alas! Alas!

Again the spectre of the earth-born Argus,
Stings me to madness: O, defend me, Earth.—

D

I tremble

I tremble at the sight of that sly guard,
 Who with his hundred eyes pursues my steps :
 Whom, tho' interr'd, the earth can not confine ;
 But rising from the shades he haunts me still,
 And makes me wander without food, forlorn,
 Along the sandy shore.—But hark !
 The vocal waxen-pipe (of Mercury)
 Sounds in my ears a soporiferous mode.—
 Ah ! whither have my wanderings hurried me ?—
 Why, O thou son of Saturn, why,
 Hast thou involv'd thy poor delinquent,
 In this disgraceful misery ?
 Why am I harra's'd with these frantic terrors ?—
 Burn me with fire, hide me in the earth,
 Or fix me here a prey to some sea-monster :
 Envy me not so small a boon :—
 Long, long enough, in mazy wand'rings
 Have I been exercis'd, not knowing where,
 To set my foot
 In hopes of rest and comfort.—

Cho. Hear you yon horned damsel's plaintive cries ?

Prom. How should I not ? so loud her frantic moan ?

'Tis she ; daughter of Inachus, who late
 With amorous passion warm'd the breast of Jove :
 She, who by Juno's fierce resentment driv'n,
 Travels vast tracts of land in restless pain.

Io. Whence do I hear my father's name ?—

Who art thou, that, in wretchedness thyself,
 So plainly hast pointed out my wretched state ?—
 True ;—I am afflicted by the pow'rs above,
 With a distemper'd phantasm,
 Whose furious stings,
 Drives me from field to field,
 Pining with hunger : so enrag'd the will
 Of some oppressive pow'r.—Alas ! alas !
 Can there be any wretchedness like mine ?—
 But tell me clearly, if thou knowest,
 What I must suffer more,

If

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS. 21

If I must suffer more, and what to do:
What remedy for this disease,
Or what redress, I may expect;
Impart to me
A poor unhappy woman.—

Prom. I will; whatever you require to know:
And not in terms perplex'd, but plain and clear,
As well becomes a friend to treat a friend.—
Know then Prometheus; who gave fire to man.—

Io. The universal blessing stands confess'd,
And for this crime, Prometheus, if a crime;
Dost thou now suffer this dire punishment?

Prom. Permit me to forget my own distress.

Io. Will you refuse to grant so small a boon?

Prom. Ask, what you will; if proper, I obey.

Io. What pow'r enchain'd you to this horrid rock?

Prom. The will of Jove, and Vulcan's mighty hand.

Io. What provocation? what the heinous crime?

Prom. No more of this; let what is said, suffice.

Io. Oblige me then in this: say when, or where,
My wretched wand'rings shall enjoy a calm?

Prom. 'Twere better to be ign'rant, than to know.

Io. Inform me what; if I must suffer more.

Prom. Think not I would refuse ev'n this request.

Io. Why then reluctant; to declare the whole?

Pro. Lest my good-will should more distract your mind.

Io. Let not your kind concern debar my wish.

Prom. 'Tis your command; and I obey.—Then
hear—

Cho. Not yet; we pray; till we are first oblig'd.—
Fain would we learn her story from herself;
And fatal cause of this uncouth disease.—

What more she has to fear, 'tis yours to tell.—

Prom. This their request must be complied with, *Io.*
They claim it, as relations: know you not,
They are your father's sisters: and, to dwell
On a distressful tale, that will draw tears
From sympathizing eyes, gives some relief.—

Io. I know not to deny, or you, or them.—
 Hear then my story in descriptive words;
 Tho' painful to me to relate the cause
 Of this severe affliction (from above)
 And loss of beauty in this horrid form.—

Some pow'r into my virgin-chamber stole,
 In nightly visions, and with flattering words,
 (Bane of our sex) perplex'd and sooth'd my mind.—

“ Hail! thou thrice happy maid! indulge no more
 “ This solitary state: fly, to embrace
 “ An offer of the highest dignity;
 “ Lo! Jove himself, enraptur'd with your charms,
 “ Impatient waits you, in the pleasant meads
 “ Of Lerna (where now feed your father's flocks).
 “ Consider, child; reluctant as you are,
 “ How vain it is to wince, and spurn the bed
 “ Of him, who rules the skies; haste then, fair maid,
 “ To satisfy the longing eyes of Jove.”

Thus was I courted nightly, and disturb'd
 With constant visions; till, in duty bold,
 My father I inform'd of this address.
 To Pytho, and Dodona, the good king
 Sent frequent embassies, to learn, wherewith
 In deed, or word, he might oblige the gods.
 But vain this caution, they return'd with answers,
 Obscure, evasive, ænigmatical.

At length he this plain oracle receiv'd,
 Attended with an absolute command.—

Either, to banish me his house, and land,
 An exile in some corner of the earth;

Or, this refus'd, the fiery bolts of Jove
 Should totally annihilate his race.

Induc'd by this, Apollo's oracle,
 He straight expell'd me from my native home,
 Unwilling, an unwilling vagabond:

But he, to this unkind, unnatural deed,
 Was forc'd by the resistless pow'r of Jove,

From hence, transform'd in body, and in mind,

I.

An

An horned monster, as you see, I rov'd,
Bounding, with frantic gallop, from the goad
Of stinging pain, to the clear Cenchrian stream,
The boundary of Lerna, once my home.
Hither the cruel earth-born Argus came,
And with his hundred eyes still watch'd my steps.
When lo! a sudden unexpected stroke
Slew this my guardian: yet I wander still
With the same frenzy scourg'd, from land to land.—

The real facts you've heard: now say what more
Must I expect to suffer; nor, in pity,
Sooth my misfortunes with fictitious words:
For what more base, what more to be abhorr'd,
Than is the poison of a formal speech,
Patch'd up with flatt'ring insincerity?—

Cho. Yet, stay, desist, Prometheus.
Never, O, never would I wish, a tale
So strange should reach my startled ears:
Never desire, that such a dreadful scene,
Of horror mix'd with ruin,
Grievous to see, more grievous to be borne.
Thus with its double edge,
Should harrow up my soul.
O, Fate, Fate!
I tremble to behold the dire distress
Of this unhappy Io.

Prom. Do you already tremble? are your minds
With horror fill'd, yet, stay, attend the sequel.—

Cho. Say on. The wretched oft are glad to hear
The winding up of their catastrophe.—

Prom. I have oblig'd you in your first request;
And Io's story from herself you've heard:
Attend to what this young unhappy maid
Has yet to fear from Juno's jealous wrath.

Daughter of Inachus, with patient ear,
And mind attentive treasure up my words;
That you may learn the period of your woes.

Hence

Hence eastward, to the rising of the sun,
Pass through the wide uncultivated waste,
'Till you arrive among the Scythian boors,
Who dwell in airy huts, woven with twigs,
And mounted high on carriages; expert
Are they with spears, and the far-flying dart:
Approach them not; but, passing through the land,
Incline your way towards the rocky coast;
Where, on the left, in most laborious toil,
Now dwell the iron-working Chalybes:
But shun the fierce inhospitable race.
A rapid stream, from hence Araxis call'd,
You'll see, and cannot pass; till you arrive
At the cloud-piercing brow of Caucasus;
Where in a narrower flow it guggles down.
And hence descending tow'rd's the South, you'll find
The Amazonian tribe, a warlike crew,
Men-haters; (in the Themisyrrian plains
About Thermodon, they were wont to dwell:
Where too the Salmydsian promontory
Stretches her craggy neck into the sea;
(Stepdame of mariners, and bane of ships);
These shall conduct you with officious care.
At length you'll come to the Cimmerian isthmus
On the Mœotic lake, where you must ford
The streights undaunted; and which, after-ages,
From this attempt, shall call the Bosphorus.
Thus having left the European coast,
You'll reach the Asiatic continent. —

And seems not Jove the tyrant of the gods,
In all his actions, alike violent?
Who, to enjoy a mortal, tho' a god,
Hath doom'd her thus to wander in distress? —

A most ungrateful wooer hast thou found,
My child; for, what I've said, can scarce be call'd
A proem to the sequel of thy woes. —

Io. Ah! wretched me! Alas! alas! —

Prom.

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS. 25

Prom. Well may you sigh and groan; yet further cause
Will soon appear, when I've display'd the rest.—

Cho. And has the wretched Io more to suffer?

Prom. Yes; a tempestuous sea of swelling woes.—

Io. Why should I live? ah! why do I delay
To dash this burden from the steepy rock,
And end all my calamities in death?

'Twere better once to die, than to taste death
In such a sad variety of pain.—

Prom. How then would you support the weight I feel,
Who cannot die; if death, as you suppose,
Be the last evil mortals have to fear?—

There is no end of my distress, in view,
'Till Jove himself is coited from his throne.—

Io. Shall Jove then be dethron'd?—Oh happy day!—

Prom. You would enjoy the ruin?

Io. And why not,

Since all these dreadful evils come from him?—

Prom. Upon the certainty of this depend.

Io. What pow'r shall wrest his tyrant sceptre from him?

Prom. His indiscretion, and absurd design.

Io. If, without detriment, disclose the means.

Prom. A marriage contract will embroil the god.

Io. Above, or here below? if lawful, say.

Prom. 'Tis not; nor of concern to you to know.

Io. And shall his mate dethrone him?

Prom. No; the son,

Whom she brings forth, shall rise above his fire.

Io. And is this peril not to be escap'd?

Prom. No surely; if before I'm not releas'd.

Io. Who can release you 'gainst the will of Jove?

Prom. Believe me, one descended from yourself.

Io. How say you? Shall a child of mine do this?

Prom. Confess'd the thirteenth generation hence.

Io. The prophecy to me is somewhat dark.

Prom. Let it be so; your suff'rings too the same.

Io. Drive not the hope you gave me, to despair.

Prom. Well; of two things, one I'll communicate.

Io.

26 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

Io. Name them, Prometheus; and give me the choice.

Prom. I will; chuse, whether I shall now declare
Your future suff'rings, or my own release.

Cho. Let Io in the former be oblig'd;
And us, your friends, in this: such our desire,
That she may learn, where her sad journey ends;
And we, the happy means of your release.

Prom. It shall be so; I will oblige you both:
And, Io, while your wand'rings I relate;
Write them in the sure tables of your heart.

When you have pass'd the waters that divide
The continents; and, tending to the East,
The pathway of the sun, have likewise pass'd
The noisy waves of Pontus, you will come
To the Gorgonian plains of Cifthinè:
Where dwell the warlike Graiæ, sisters three,
Daughters of Phorcus, maidens, with one eye,
In common, and one tooth; who ne'er beheld
The rays of Phœbus, or the nightly moon:
Near them, three other sisters, Gorgons call'd;
Their shoulders wing'd; their tresses curling snakes,
Most hateful hags, whom to behold is death.
This necessary caution, pray, observe.——
Other strange sights, most dreadful to behold,
Are the fierce griffins, the dumb dogs of Jove,
Bill'd like an eagle; and the one-ey'd troop,
Of Arimaspian horse, a cruel race;
Who dwell near Pluto's stream, that flows with gold.
Approach them not: pass on; and you will come
To a black people, dwelling near the springs
Of Phœbus, whence the gentle Æthiops flows:
Along whose banks you go, till you arrive
At Catabathmos; where the Byblis hills
Pour forth the sacred wholesome streams of Nile:
This brings you to the land, triangular,
Of Ægypt, where, by the unerring Fates,
To raise, to you, and yours, a colony
Of wide and great dominion, 'tis decreed.——

Whate'er

Whate'er in these my words, to you seems dark,
Or unintelligible, I will explain.
More leisure than I wish detains me here.

Cbo. If ought remains of Io's doleful tale;
Say on; if not: remember our request

Prom. The sum of her excursions she hath heard;
And now, that she may give to these my words
The stronger credit, some of her past troubles,
Before she hither came, I will recount;
In argument, that what I've said is true.
And to avoid prolixity of speech,
I'll hasten, to your wish'd-for place of rest.

When first you came to the Molossian coasts,
And to the fam'd Dodona's lofty grove,
Where Jupiter Thesprôtus hath his seat,
Oracular; and where, strange miracle!
The vocal oaks point out futurity;
By these you were saluted; (in plain terms,
And not, as usual, ænigmatical,)
"The future celebrated wife of Jove:"
(How happy, if such fawning honours please!
Impell'd by goading frenzy, hence you rov'd,
Doubling each journey, the sea-coasts along,
Ev'n to the bay of Rhea, which recess
The future ages will Ionian call;
To mark the sure memorial of your path.—
Hence learn that strength of mind, with which endow'd
I speak of things to come, not yet divulg'd.

To you, my friends, and Io, what remains,
Shall be directed, as before engag'd.

Near to the mouth of seven-channel'd Nile,
On the land's utmost border stands a city,
Canôpus call'd; there Jove, with gentle hand,
And amorous dalliance shall soon restore
Thy beauty, and sweet sanity of mind:
And in due time you will bring forth a son,
Hence call'd black Epaphus, the son of Jove,
Whose empire shall extend through all the land,

E

The

28 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

The Nile o'erflows; and in the fifth descent,
 Shall rise a prince, with fifty daughters blest'd;
 Who to shun contract with their fifty kinsmen,
 Shall fly, in vain, to Argos; for, pursued,
 (Like fleeting doves by the rapacious kites,)
 They must submit to the unlawful bond;
 While the fierce conquerors triumph in the spoil.
 But heaven to punish this their violence
 Shall lay them low in the Pelasgian earth,
 By the weak instrument of female hands.
 For, every bride, embolden'd by the night
 In daring deeds, shall dip the reeking sword
 In the life-blood of her own paramour;
 (O may such contracts all my foes attend;)
 Save one, susceptible of connubial love;
 Who from her sanguine purpose shall recede;
 And, rather than be cruel, chuse the name
 Of tender rebel to her father's will;
 From hence shall Argos own a race of kings.
 These to describe would swell my narrative
 Beyond the bounds propos'd. Know this alone;
 That from this branch the mighty hero comes,
 Skill'd in the bow, and fam'd throughout the world,
 Who shall deliver me from these vile bonds.
 So ancient Themis, Titan's daughter, spake
 With her prophetic voice to me her son.
 But how, or where, needs no discussion here,
 Of no advantage, save to me alone.

Io. Alas! alas!

Again inflam'd, and planet-struck,
 I with distemper'd fancy rove;
 The pointed sting now pierceth deep:
 Trembles my heart with palsied fear,
 My eye-balls roll, as they would quit
 Their sockets; with impetuous rage
 I'm hurried from the course; my tongue
 Knows no articulate sound, but joins

With

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS. 29

With horrid tone
The bellowing waves of trouble.

STROPHE.

Chor. How wise was he, how truly wise,
Who fram'd, and then divulg'd
This precept,
That, only like with like
Could make the marriage-contract happy;
And that 'twere safer for mechanics,
Knowing their sphere, not to affect
Or fortune or high birth!

ANTISTROPHE.

Never, O never, may the fates,
By their decree, behold
Me wretched,
In the embrace of Jove,
Or any of the tribe celestial.
Yet praise I not the persevering
Virgin; when I thus lo see
Harra's'd by Juno's wrath.

EPODE.

I should not fear, if I were once
Secure in equal marriage.
But let no god with amorous eye,
Inevitable, look this way.
For how unequal combat this!
Inextricable labyrinth!
I know not how I should behave,
Or how escape the storm:
So pow'rful is the will of Jove.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

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END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

30 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

A C T V.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

PROMETHEUS.

SURELY this haughty insolence of Jove
 Shall soon be humbled; such the consequence
 Of his intended marriage; to dethrone,
 And mix him with the rabble deities:
 That so his father's curse may be fulfill'd;
 Which Saturn, when expell'd his ancient throne,
 Indignant laid on his rebellious son.
 None other god can point him out the way,
 To extricate himself from this distress:
 Yes, both the cause, and the event I know;
 If prudence gives it not a timely check.
 For, tho' with thunder arm'd, he sits secure,
 And brandisheth around his fiery bolts;
 They shall not help him, nor avail to save
 The monarch from a base inglorious fall:
 Ev'n such an adversary he now prepares
 Against himself, of strange superior might,
 Who shall out-thunder this great Jove; and wrest
 With pow'r invincible, from Neptune's hand
 The three-fang'd spear, with which he shakes the earth.
 That, from experience, Jove the different state
 May learn; what 'tis to rule and what to serve.

Cho. Speak you these things; Prometheus, as you wish?

Prom. Not only as I wish;—it shall be so.

Cho. Can we expect that Jove will e'er submit?

Prom. He shall; to more than I have yet disclos'd.

Cho. Dare you such bold expressions, without fear?

Prom. Yes; what have I to fear, who cannot die?

Cho. Some evil than the present more severe.

Prom. Let him exert his power.—I know he will.—

Cho.

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

31

Cho. Who fear the wrath of Nemesis, are wise.

Prom. Be thou then wise; fear, worship, fawn upon
This everlasting monarch: as for me
I nor regard, nor fear him: let him act
Full many years, with full despotic pow'r.
Enough for me, his reign will have an end.—
But see; Jove's nimble messenger appears,
No doubt he from his upstart master brings,
With speed obsequious, some important news.

Enter MERCURY.

Merc. Thee sophist, thee superlatively vain,
Morose, and proud, rebellious to the gods,
Yet courting man with sacred gifts, the fire
You stole from heav'n; thee, the great Jove, our king,
Commands to shew, what marriage 'tis you boast,
That shall dethrone him from his native skies:
And speak, without equivocation, true,
And plain, in each particular: for, know,
No other means can soften his high wrath.

Prom. So weighty, and so confident thy speech,
It well befits the lacquey of the gods.
You triumph in your new abodes, and think,
(But vainly think) your palaces secure.
Have I not seen examples; first, the giants,
And Saturn, next, hurl'd from the starry throne?
These, and with great disgrace, shall Jove himself
Soon follow, mighty as he is.—Think'st thou,
That I can fear these modern potentates,
Or Jove himself? Prometheus knows no fear.—
Return then, whence you came; and, fly with speed,
Back the same way; for, what your master asks,
To know from me, you never shall obtain.—

Merc. Was it not this perverse, and froward mind,
That rack'd thee justly with these horrid pains?

Prom. And I enjoy my pain: nor would I change it,
For the low servile state of messenger.

Thus

2 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

Thus wretched, I would rather serve this rock,
Than be the duteous errand-boy of Jove.—

Excuse this treatment; only, in return:

'Tis fit the scornful should submit to scorn.

Merc. You seem to glory in these horrid bonds.

Prom. Yes, and will glory; but with all my foes
So gloried; and ev'n thou, among the rest.

Merc. Am I the cause of this? why blame you me?

Prom. In truth, the whole assembly of the gods
I hate alike, who thus afflicting me,
Evil for good ungratefully return.

Merc. You rave; and seem extravagantly mad;—

Prom. I am; if madness this, to hate a foe,

Merc. Not to be borne, had you been prosperous.—

Prom. Alas! alas!

Merc. Unknown to Jove is such distressful sound.

Prom. It may be so; in stranger things old Time
Often instructs us.

Merc. —But time hath not yet
Restor'd to you due sanity of mind.

Prom. True; or I had not thus demean'd myself,
To hold discourse with thee, Jove's messenger.

Merc. Still foreign to our purpose all you say.—

Prom. I ought my benefactors to oblige?—

Merc. Mere trifling this; you spurn me as a boy.

Prom. A boy indeed; or somewhat not so wise;
If you expect intelligence from me.—

No machination, no indignity,

Your master can invent to torture me,

Shall e'er compel me to reveal my thoughts;

While fetter'd with these ignominious bonds.

Let him dart forth his lightnings wing'd with fire:

With storms of hail, and peals of vollied thunder,

Shake and confound the whole terrestrial globe;

He never shall prevail on me to say,

By whom, or what, endanger'd is his throne.—

Merc. Consider well, what profit seems in this.

Prom.

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS. 33

Prom. Long since I have consider'd and resolv'd.

Merc. Vain, and unthinking! let these present ills
Have their effect, and teach you to be wise.

Prom. No more; deaf as the waves to all persuasion,
Your words but trouble me; ne'er think that Jove
Can strike such terror as to make me cringe,
And sue for pardon, with uplifted hands,
And pity-pleading tears: far, far from me,
Be such a weakness, and effeminate soul.

Merc. I now perceive, Prometheus, that my words
Have no avail, nor can my friendly pray'rs,
Or counsel, soften your obdurate heart:
But like a restive colt, you champ the bit,
With teeth indignant, nor will hear the rein;
Proud of vain strength against superior force:
For, know, an obstinate and stubborn will,
Dependant on itself, is weak and vain.

Besides, consider, if rebellious still,
My wholesome counsel you reject with scorn,
What tempests will ensue from wrathful Jove.
A dreadful inundation of all ills
Will overwhelm thee.—Jove this craggy cliff
Will tear asunder with his flaming bolts,
And hide thee, wretch, within its stony bosom;
And this for many ages; but again
You shall revisit earth, and rise to pains
As yet unknown: when his blood-thirsty bird,
With canine appetite shall feed upon
Some fragment of your body; and each day,
Uncall'd, shall on your liver (tho' consum'd,
Still growing) make a most luxurious feast.
Nor can you hope redress until some god
Shall take upon himself these horrid pains:
And, as a voluntary visitant,
Descend the dark abyss of Tartarus,
Where death and horror reign.—Consider too,
These are, not idle boasts, or empty threats:
Dictates of solid truth: the mouth divine

Knows:

34 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

Knows no prevarication ; every word
Is, to a tittle, sure to be fulfill'd.—
Weigh well these things ; nor think proud frowardness
More gainful than a prudent humble mind.

Cho. Wise admonition Mercury seems to give :
While thus he counsels you to throw aside
This stubborn temper ; and with duteous care
Resume your wonted wisdom.—Pray, be rul'd.—
“ For a wise man to fall, and persevere
“ In error, cancels all his former good.”

Prom. Whate'er his counsel or his threats ;
I knew before. Nor is it strange,
A foe should suffer from a foe.
But let his Jove in angry mood,
Flash, all around my naked head,
His blazing tresses of blue fire ;
And shake the regions of the skies
With horrid whirlwinds and loud bursts
Of bellowing thunder ; let the storm
Tear from its roots the trembling earth ;
And all in wild confusion mix
The waters of the boisterous seas,
Ev'n with the starry orbs of heav'n :
Or let him hurl this body down
To the infernal shades below
Bound in indissoluble chains ;
With all his pow'r,
He cannot me extirpate.

Merc. Still, still I hear but raving words,
That spring from a distemper'd brain ;
'Tis madness all ; which were it free,
And prosp'rous, would rage the more.— *

* So Stanley, referring to v. 978. But the Scholiast seems to take these words in the following sense ;

'Tis madness all ; and should he still
Think himself happy ; still how mad !

PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS. 36

But you, his sympathizing friends,
I now exhort to leave this place;
Left thunder shake
Your tender frames to atoms.

Cho. If Mercury expects in us
Obedience; he must now display
A more persuasive eloquence.
The doctrine here advanc'd, contains
A precept we can ne'er obey.
Can it be right, as you presume,
To leave our friend in his distress?
No; rather let us here partake
His suff'rings: we have learn'd of old
To hate betrayers of their friend;
Nor any crime
Detest we, more abhorrent.

Merc. Be it enough; you are forewarn'd:
Remember this; lest, when involv'd
In dire calamity, you blame
Or fortune, or the pow'rs above;
And say that Jove surpriz'd you with
Oppression's cruel load:
For, not to him, but to yourselves
You wilfully shall owe the blame;
When not by chance, or privily,
Into the inextricable net
Of misery
You fall through indiscretion.

[*Exeunt Mercury and Chorus.*]

Prom. In fact, and not in words alone,
The earth now shakes; the thunder rolls,
And Echo the dread sound returns;
The fiery meteors flash around;
The whirlwind scatters clouds of dust;
From the four hinges of the world,
The warring winds, with mutual rage,
The universal uproar join;
While the big billows of the main,

F

In

36 PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS.

In wild confusion, dash the skies.
Such is the storm; that Jove now sends,
To strike fresh terror in my soul.

O Themis, venerable dame,
From whom I sprung! thou æther bright,
Diffusing common light to all,
Behold, behold,
What I unjustly suffer!



F I N I S

